



ORDER NUMBER
G-89-20

IN THE MATTER OF
the *Utilities Commission Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473

and

Pacific Northern Gas (N.E.) Ltd.
COVID-19 Deferral Account Application

BEFORE:

D. M. Morton, Panel Chair
A. K. Fung, QC Commissioner
R. I. Mason, Commissioner
T. A. Loski, Commissioner

on April 17, 2020

ORDER

WHEREAS:

- A. On April 9, 2020 Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. (PNG-West) and Pacific Northern Gas (N.E.) Ltd. (PNG[NE]) (collectively, PNG) filed an application with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) for approval to establish a new interest bearing deferral account, the COVID-19 Deferral Account, for each of PNG-West and PNG(NE) (Application). The Application is made pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission Act*;
- B. PNG(NE) proposes to include the following in the COVID-19 Deferral Account: (1) any bad debt resulting from customers in any rate class who do not pay their bills due to the impacts of COVID-19 on their financial circumstances; and (2) any unplanned expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic that PNG(NE) has incurred related to continuing operations;
- C. PNG(NE) also plans to implement a bill payment deferral program that will allow for up to a three month deferral of energy bill payments for residential customers served under Rate Schedule (RS) 1 and small commercial customers served under either RS 2 (Small Commercial) or RS 23 (Small Commercial Transportation) that are unable to pay their energy bills due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- D. On April 14, 2020 the BCUC issued information requests to PNG regarding the Application and PNG filed its responses on April 16, 2020;
- E. On April 17, 2020, the BCUC held a web-based oral hearing regarding the Application; and
- F. The BCUC has reviewed the Application, evidence and submissions of PNG and finds that interim approval is warranted. The BCUC considers that the establishment of a public hearing process and regulatory timetable is also warranted.

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission Act*, the BCUC orders as follows:

1. PNG(NE) is granted approval on an interim basis, effective the date of this Order, to:
 - (i) Offer a bill payment deferral program between the date of this Order and June 30, 2020 to residential customers served under RS 1 and small commercial customers served under either RS 2 or RS 23 that are unable to pay their energy bills due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic; and
 - (ii) Establish a new interest-bearing COVID-19 Deferral Account at PNG(NE)'s weighted average cost of debt to record the following:
 - a. Any unrecoverable revenues resulting from customers in any rate class who do not pay their bills due to the impacts of COVID-19 on their financial circumstances, tracked by rate class; and
 - b. Any incremental, unplanned expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic that PNG(NE) has incurred related to continuing operations, tracked by expense category.
2. PNG(NE) must provide notice of the Application and a copy of this Order, electronically where possible, to all registered interveners in the PNG(NE) 2020-2021 Revenue Requirements Application.
3. PNG(NE) must publish notice of this Application on its Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms, as soon as reasonably possible but no later than Friday, April 24, 2020.
4. A public hearing process is established, as set out in the regulatory timetable attached as Appendix A to this Order.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 17th day of April 2020.

BY ORDER

Original signed by:

D. M. Morton
Commissioner

Attachment

Pacific Northern Gas (N.E.) Ltd.
COVID-19 Deferral Account Application

REGULATORY TIMETABLE

Action	Date (2020)
Intervener Registration	Friday May 1
Interveners to advise the BCUC of their intent, if any, to submit written Information Requests on this Application to PNG(NE)	Friday May 1
Further process	To be determined